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WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON BIRTHPLACE HOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

FEBRUARY 15, 2007.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BINGAMAN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 245]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the bill (S. 245) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to designate the President William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home in Hope, Arkansas, as a National Historic Site and unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE MEASURE

The purpose of S. 245 is to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to accept title to the William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home site, which the Clinton Birthplace Foundation has offered to donate to the United States, and to designate the site, upon its acquisition, as the William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home National Historic Site.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

Hope, Arkansas, is the birthplace of William Jefferson Clinton, the 42nd President of the United States. The house at 117 S. Hervey Street was built in 1917 and later belonged to President Clinton's maternal grandparents, Eldridge and Edith Cassidy. President Clinton lived there from his birth in 1946 until his mother married Roger Clinton in 1950.

The site is currently owned by a non-profit organization, the Clinton Birthplace Foundation, and has been restored to the same state as when President Clinton lived there. The Foundation has

offered to donate the site to the United States for inclusion in the National Park System.

According to the National Park Service, when the home was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994, it was described as the “single property most significantly and exclusively associated with Clinton’s humble beginnings. . .”

The National Park Service currently manages several sites associated with the lives of former Presidents. S. 245 would designate the Clinton Birthplace Home as a National Historic Site upon the donation of the site by the Foundation.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 245 was introduced by Senators Pryor and Lincoln on January 10, 2007. During the 109th Congress, the Committee considered similar legislation, S. 2417, also sponsored by Senators Pryor and Lincoln, and H.R. 4192, sponsored by Representative Ross. H.R. 4192 passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 409–12 on March 8, 2006. The Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on both measures on May 16, 2006 (S. Hrg. 109–547).

At its business meeting on January 31, 2007, the Committee ordered S. 245 to be favorably reported.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on January 31, 2007, by a voice vote of a quorum present recommends that the Senate pass S. 245.

SUMMARY OF THE MEASURE

S. 245 directs the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to designate the William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home site located at 117 S. Hervey Street in Hope, Arkansas, as a National Historic Site and unit of the National Park System, if unencumbered fee simple title to the site is donated by the Clinton Birthplace Foundation, Inc.

The Secretary is directed to administer the site in accordance with the laws generally applicable to national historic sites, including the National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1–4) and the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The following estimate of the costs of this measure has been provided by the Congressional Budget Office:

S. 245—A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to designate the President William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home in Hope, Arkansas, as a National Historic Site and unit of the National Park System

S. 245 would direct the National Park Service (NPS) to designate the William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home in Arkansas as a national historic site if the Clinton Birthplace Foundation donates the house and related property to the federal government.

Based on information provided by the NPS, CBO expects that the federal government would accept donation of the Clinton home and other property in fiscal year 2007. We estimate that the costs of

preparing and operating the site as a unit of the National Park System would be about \$1 million a year, assuming the availability of appropriated funds. Enacting S. 245 would not affect direct spending or revenues.

The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

REGULATORY IMPACT EVALUATION

In compliance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee makes the following evaluation of the regulatory impact which would be incurred in carrying out S. 245.

The bill is not a regulatory measure in the sense of imposing Government-established standards or significant economic responsibilities on private individuals and businesses.

No personal information would be collected in administering the program. Therefore, there would be no impact on personal privacy.

Little, if any, additional paperwork would result from the enactment of S. 245.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Because S. 245 is identical to legislation passed by the Senate in the 109th Congress, the Committee did not request Executive Agency views. The testimony provided by the National Park Service at the Subcommittee hearing on S. 2417 and H.R. 4192 in the 109th Congress follows:

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN P. MARTIN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify on S. 2417 and H.R. 4192, bills that would authorize the Secretary to establish the President William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home as a National Historic Site and a unit of the National Park System in Hope, Arkansas. H.R. 4192 passed the House of Representatives on March 8, 2006, without a hearing. The Department supports the effort to honor the birthplace home of former President Clinton, but suggests amending S. 2417 and H.R. 4192 to authorize a study.

S. 2417 and H.R. 4192 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to designate the William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home as a National Historic Site and a unit of the National Park System should the Secretary acquire, by donation only, the birthplace home and any personal property related to that site from the Clinton Birthplace Foundation, Inc. The Secretary would administer the unit in accordance with laws generally applicable to preserving national historic sites. It is our understanding that the Clinton Birthplace Foundation also intends to donate the exist-

ing visitor center located at 415 West, Division Street and adjacent to the birthplace home, however this property was inadvertently left out of S. 2417 and H.R. 4192 when the bills were introduced.

In 1998, Congress passed Public Law 105–391, the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998, which requires congressional authorization of areas to be studied for potential new units of the National Park System. The law also designates the criteria to be followed by the National Park Service (NPS) in determining whether to recommend an area as a unit of the National Park System.

We recognize the importance of the birthplace of President William Jefferson Clinton and therefore appreciate the goals of S. 2417 and H.R. 4192. Consistent with our testimony on the Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home in March 2001, we suggest, however, that the subcommittee ensure that the intent of Congress, as expressed in Public Law 105–391, is carried out by amending the bill to authorize a study of the birthplace and the visitor center to determine whether they conform to the criteria of Public Law 105–391. We recognize the potential significance of these properties and would support an authorization of a new study. We would be glad to work with the subcommittee on the appropriate language.

With respect to historical sites, the studies do not only look at whether the event or person associated with the site was historically significant. They also look at the integrity of the buildings, and other factors, such as whether there are other sites that might more appropriately tell the story associated with a particular individual.

The National Park System consists of many previous residences of former Presidents. However, there are also many residences of former Presidents that are not part of the system. A study would look at whether the Federal government is the most appropriate entity to manage the site. Some sites are managed by other entities, such as state governments and private foundations. Conducting a professional study allows Congress to be sure it is protecting an area that meets the criteria of the National Park System.

A study also will enable the NPS and the Congress to identify the costs in acquiring, restoring, and operating a potential site. We believe that the information gathered during the study process is invaluable and better ensures that the NPS can continue its progress in addressing maintenance backlog needs in our national parks. In fact, in March 2001, the Department also took the position that a study was needed when asked to testify on the designation of the Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home as a National Historic Site. Similar to S. 2417 and H.R. 4192, that bill also proposed designation prior to the authorization and completion of a study.

Presidential homes and sites provide a valuable link to understanding our country's history and government and are an important part of our national heritage. Plans to

purchase and restore the birthplace home of then President William Jefferson Clinton began in 1993, and the Clinton Birthplace Foundation, a non-profit organization, was formed to purchase, restore, and promote the history of the site. The two and one-half story American four-square home, patterned from a design in France, was built in 1917 by Dr. H.S. Garrett. The home is located at 117 South Hervey Street in Hope, Arkansas, and belonged to President Clinton's maternal grandparents, Eldridge and Edith Cassidy. William Jefferson Blythe, as he was then known, lived there from his birth in 1946, until his mother married Roger Clinton in 1950.

The residence has been returned to its identical state when President Clinton lived there as a young boy. It is currently open for public tours operated by the Clinton Birthplace Foundation. When the home was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994, it was described as ". . . the single property most significantly and exclusively associated with Clinton's humble beginnings, the inner strength he learned from his mother, and the dedication to purpose that has sustained him throughout his distinguished political career."

The William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace site demonstrates the efforts of a local community working together to preserve and to tell the story of the birth and childhood of a man who later became the 42nd President of the United States to present and future generations.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to comment. This concludes my prepared remarks and I will be happy to answer any questions you or other subcommittee members might have.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee notes that no changes in existing law are made by the bill S. 245, as ordered reported.

